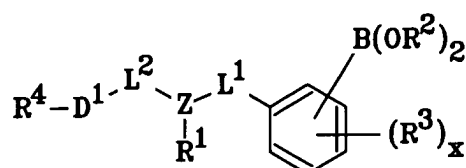


IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel claims 1-31 without prejudice or disclaimer. Please add the following new claims 32-44:

1 ~~32.~~ (New) A method of preparing a biocompatible polymer matrix for
2 immobilizing a compound of the formula



(I)

wherein:

D¹ is a dye selected from the group consisting of fluorescent dyes, luminescent dyes and colorimetric dyes;

R¹, R³ and R⁴ are each independently substituents which alter the electronic properties of the groups to which they are attached or are functional groups which can form covalent linkages to the surrounding polymer matrix;

each R² is a member independently selected from the group consisting of hydrogen or C₁-C₄ alkyl;

each L¹ and L² is a linking group having from zero to four contiguous atoms selected from the group consisting of carbon, oxygen, nitrogen, sulfur and phosphorus;

Z is a heteroatom selected from the group consisting of nitrogen, sulfur, oxygen and phosphorus; and

x is an integer from zero to four, said method comprising:

admixing a diisocyanate and a hydrophilic polymer, wherein said hydrophilic polymer is a member selected from the group consisting of a hydrophilic polymer diol, a hydrophilic polymer diamine and combinations thereof, wherein said diisocyanate comprises about 50 mol% of the reactants in said admixture to form said biocompatible polymer matrix.

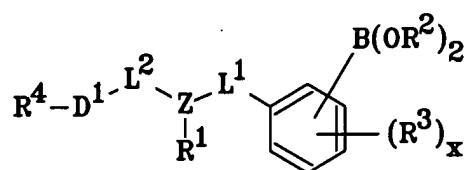
1 33. (New) A method in accordance with claim 32, wherein said
2 biocompatible polymer matrix further comprises an outer hydrogel coating.

1 34. (New) A method in accordance with claim 33, wherein said hydrogel
2 coating is made by:

3 admixing a diisocyanate, a hydrophilic polymer, wherein said hydrophilic
4 polymer is a member selected from the group consisting of a hydrophilic polymer diol, a
5 hydrophilic polymer diamine and combinations thereof, and, optionally, adding a chain
6 extender, wherein said diisocyanate comprises about 50 mol% of the reactants in said
7 admixture to form said biocompatible polymer matrix with a hydrogel coating, said hydrogel
8 having a water pickup of from about 120% to about 400% by weight.

1 35. (New) A method in accordance with claim 32, further comprising
2 admixing a siloxane polymer having amino, hydroxyl or carboxylic acid functional groups at
3 the chain termini.

1 36. (New) A biocompatible polymer matrix comprising a compound of the
2 formula



(I)

3 wherein:

4
5 D^1 is a dye selected from the group consisting of fluorescent dyes, luminescent
6 dyes and colorimetric dyes;

7 R^1 , R^3 and R^4 are each independently substituents which alter the electronic
8 properties of the groups to which they are attached or are functional groups which can form
9 covalent linkages to the surrounding polymer matrix;

10 each R^2 is a member independently selected from the group consisting of
11 hydrogen or C_1 - C_4 alkyl;

12 each L^1 and L^2 is a linking group having from zero to four contiguous atoms
13 selected from the group consisting of carbon, oxygen, nitrogen, sulfur and phosphorus;
14

15 Z is a heteroatom selected from the group consisting of nitrogen, sulfur, oxygen
16 and phosphorus; and

17 x is an integer from zero to four.

1 37. (New) A biocompatible polymer matrix in accordance with claim 36,
2 further comprising a permeable coating.

1 38. (New) A biocompatible polymer matrix in accordance with claim 36,
2 further comprising a chain extender.

1 39. (New) A biocompatible polymer matrix in accordance with claim 36,
2 wherein said compound of Formula I is immobilized by covalent attachment to said matrix.

1 40. (New) A biocompatible polymer matrix in accordance with claim 36,
2 wherein said polymer matrix is a member of the group selected from a polyurethane polymer,
3 an acrylate polymer, a hydrogel polymer, a silicon-containing polymer and mixtures thereof.

1 41. (New) A biocompatible polymer matrix in accordance with claim 40,
2 wherein said acrylate polymer is poly-hydroxymethylacrylate (P-HEMA).

1 42. (New) A biocompatible polymer matrix in accordance with claim 37,
2 wherein said permeable coating is a member selected from the group consisting of hydrogel,
3 cellulose, acetate, poly-hydroxymethylacrylate (P-HEMA), nafion, and glutaraldehyde.

1 43. (New) A biocompatible polymer matrix in accordance with claim 40,
2 wherein said silicone-containing polymer is a siloxane.

1 44. (New) A biocompatible polymer matrix in accordance with claim 36,
2 wherein said polymer matrix is formed by reacting (a) a diisocyanate and (b) a hydrophilic
3 polymer.